

'THE GLORY OF GOD IS
A HUMAN BEING FULLY ALIVE'
ST IRENAEUS

FA1

FULLY ALIVE (SEASON ONE)
'FORMATION' – LIVING THE LIFE OF FAITH IN JESUS



WEEK ONE: KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN

Prayer and Quietness

Sharing News - 10 minutes

Setting the Scene - 15 minutes

Part of a sermon preached in Salisbury Cathedral by the Most Revd Desmond Tutu (former Archbishop of Cape Town) on Sunday 8th June 2008.

...we do not need to impress God by our works, our strenuous efforts to curry the divine favour. No, God already loves us, accepts us freely. God loves us period. God loves me – and God loves me not because I am loveable but I am loveable precisely because God loves me. John of the Cross says God never began to love you, us, God loved you from all eternity, God loves you now and God will continue to love you world without end.

We don't need to work ourselves into a frazzle trying to impress God into loving us. Ours is a faith not of achievement. No, ours is a faith of grace. It is all a gift. The trouble is that we have been deceived by our culture of success, of achievement. The worst thing in our culture that can happen to us is not to do wrong things. No, the worst thing is for us is to fail. And so we work ourselves into a state so that stomach ulcers become status symbols.¹

The Liturgy of Baptism (The Presentation of the Candidates)

'Faith is the gift of God to his people. In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling.'²

Famous Face.

Below is an example of a common trend of seeking after 'self' transformation – to look better, to 'be' a different person. This stands in stark contrast to the Christian understanding of God who creates us and delights in his creation

MTV's 'I Want a Famous Face' returns to follow the transformations of twelve young people who have chosen to use plastic surgery to look like their celebrity idols. Whether it's a Pamela Anderson wanna-be or a Janet Jackson hopeful, their goals are not just to look differently, but to look exactly like their favourite stars. The series reveals that many of the subject's are pleased with the outcome of their surgeries, while others provide a more cautionary tale--with some encountering disastrous results.

*Check back each week for episode recaps with photo and video highlights, and to take our Match or Miss poll, where you get to decide whether the subjects achieved their ultimate goal: a famous face.*³*

* The subjects of this documentary series decided on their own to get plastic surgery. MTV then asked to document their journey. MTV did not pay for any surgery performed on these subjects.

Spend a short time talking about these passages, and reflect together on what they are saying about our society and God's call.

1 <http://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/services.sermons.php?id=236>. Accessed May 23rd 2009, 14:32

2 Common Worship: Christian Initiation (Church House Publishing: 2006), p.66

3 http://www.mtv.com/ontv/dyn/i_want_a_famous_face-2/series.jhtml#bio [Accessed 11.05.09 at 5:21pm]

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Listening to the Word - 45 minutes

- a) Isaiah 43:1-3a
- b) Psalm 139: 1-18

Both passages are read aloud, and this is followed by a short time of silent reflection.

Questions

1. What does it mean for you to think that God knows everything about you and speaks to you by name?
2. In Psalm 139, which aspect of God's nature is most significant or striking to you?
3. What do Isaiah 43:1-3a and Psalm 139: 1-18 reveal to you about the nature of God and the purposes of God for us?
4. This week's passages emphasise God's call to faith – which is pure gift. Does this understanding of faith as 'gift' resonate with your own experience of coming to faith? Is your faith a gift for you?
5. How can we live in a way that shows others a God who loves us as we are ?
6. Can you describe a time when you have tried to hide from God?

What shall we do? - 10 minutes

Spend a short time together thinking about what these reflections mean for us and what we should do about it.

Closing Prayers

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WEEK TWO : THIRSTING FOR TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Prayer and Quietness

Sharing News - 10 minutes

Setting the Scene - 15 minutes

St. Augustine, Confessions

'Late have I loved you, beauty so old and new: late have I loved you...You were with me, and I was not with you...You called and cried out loud to shatter my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put flight to my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.'⁴

Mother Teresa

"Jesus wants me to tell you again ... how much is the love He has for each one of you—beyond all that you can imagine. Not only He loves you, even more—He longs for you. He misses you when you don't come close. He thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don't feel worthy. Why does Jesus say 'I thirst'? What does it mean? Something so hard to explain in words— ... 'I thirst' is something much deeper than just Jesus saying 'I love you.' Until you know deep inside that Jesus thirsts for you—you can't begin to know who He wants to be for you. Or who he wants you to be for him."

What do young people 'thirst for' today? What is society encouraging young people to 'thirst' for?

Celebrity culture 'harms pupils'

Children's educational aspirations risk being damaged by the cult of celebrity, teachers' leaders have warned.

Teachers fear their pupils' obsessions with footballers, pop stars and actors are affecting their progress in school, and limiting their career aspirations.

Some 60% of teachers said their pupils most aspired to be David Beckham, in a survey for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

More than a third said pupils wanted to be famous for the sake of being famous.

Some 32% of the 304 teachers quizzed said their pupils modelled themselves on heiress Paris Hilton.⁵

Discuss people wanting 'to be famous for the sake of being famous'. How do you think can best respond and show a different way to such and understanding of life?



David Beckham was the most popular celebrity among pupils

⁴ Saint Augustine, Confessions: Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press: 1998), [Book X, para. 38] p.201

⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7296306.stm>. Article accessed May 18th 2009, 13:24. Article last updated: Friday, 14 March 2008, 12:20 GMT

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Listening to the Word - 45 minutes

- a) Psalm 42
- b) John 1: 1-18

Both passages are read aloud, and this is followed by a short time of silent reflection.

Questions

1. Psalm 42 talks of the soul thirsting ‘for God, for the living God.’ Discuss in the group the times in your life when you have found yourself thirsting after the ‘living God.’?
2. Psalm 42.7 says, “Deep calls to deep.” What does this phrase mean to you?
3. In what ways was Jesus, the Word made flesh, “full of grace and truth”?
4. What makes Jesus attractive to those who are in some way hungry or thirsty in life?

What shall we do? - 10 minutes

Closing Prayers